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AN APPEAL,

ON BEHALF OF THE

IDIOTIC AND IMBECILE CHILDREN  
OF IRELAND.

BY

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"IT IS NOT POSSIBLE THAT THESE FACTS CAN BE KNOWN AND BELIEVED, AND YET NEGLECTED. SOMETHING MUST BE DONE FOR THE IDIOT. IN CHARITY IT MUST BE DONE—IN CONSISTENCY IT MUST BE DONE—FOR VERY SHAME IT MUST BE DONE—UNLESS WE WOULD ALLOW OTHER NATIONS TO OUTFRAN US IN THE NOBLEST COURSE OF MAN—THAT OF BENEVOLENCE.

"THOSE WHO MAKE THIS APPEAL DO IT WITH CONFIDENCE—THE CONFIDENCE OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEFORE CHALLENGED PUBLIC BENEVOLENCE, AND NOT IN VAIN. CAN IT BE IN VAIN NOW? IT IS FOR THE POOR, POOR IDIOT THEY PLEAD!—FOR THE IDIOT, THE LOWEST OF ALL THE OBJECTS OF CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY,—FOR THE IDIOT, MOST NEEDING CHARITY, AND FOR WHOM CHARITY HAS DONE NOTHING. WE ASK THAT HE MAY BE ELEVATED FROM EXISTENCE TO LIFE—FROM ANIMAL BEING TO MANHOOD—FROM VACANCY AND UNCONSCIOUSNESS TO REASON AND REFLECTION. WE ASK THAT HIS SOUL MAY BE DISIMPRISONED; THAT HE MAY LOOK FORTH FROM THE BODY WITH MEANING AND INTELLIGENCE ON A WORLD FULL OF EXPRESSION; THAT HE MAY, AS A FELLOW, DISCOURSE WITH HIS FELLOWS; THAT HE MAY CEASE TO BE A BURDEN ON SOCIETY, AND BECOME A BLESSING; THAT HE MAY BE QUALIFIED TO KNOW HIS MAKER, AND LOOK BEYOND OUR PRESENT IMPERFECT MODES OF BEING TO PERFECTED LIFE IN A GLORIOUS AND EVERLASTING FUTURE!"—*From the Appeal for the Earlswood Asylum for Idiots.*

# AN APPEAL

ON BEHALF OF THE

## IDIOTIC AND IMBECILE CHILDREN OF IRELAND.

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IN almost all countries except Ireland institutions have been established for ameliorating the condition of idiots and imbecile children, the most helpless and unfortunate of the human race. In England, Scotland, France, Switzerland, Denmark, Germany, Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony, Piedmont, Sardinia, and in several of the States of America, great success has been obtained in educating and training these classes; and it has been fully established that while almost all idiots are capable of having their condition greatly improved, a very large proportion of them can be so taught as to enable them to take a place in society; to acquire habits of industry and application, so as to support themselves instead of being burdens on others; and, better than all, can have their minds awakened to a consciousness of the love and beneficence of God and the glorious truths of the Gospel.

In most countries these institutions are supported by the State; and the Government of this country has been solicited, by the Census Commissioners, in their report of 1851, and again in that of 1861, to undertake this duty. This has also been urged in a very able paper, read before the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland, by Mr. Pim,<sup>a</sup> who suggests that Boards of Guardians should not only be empowered, but that it should be compulsory on them, to send to suitable institutions, for maintenance and education, all the pauper children and young persons within their limits who may be either deaf and dumb, or blind, or imbecile. A similar

<sup>a</sup> On the Necessity of a State Provision for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb, the Blind, and Imbecile. By Jonathan Pim. Dublin: Printed by R. D. Webb and Son. 1861.

view has been taken by Dr. Wise,<sup>a</sup> who, at the beginning of the present year, published a pamphlet drawing attention to the neglected condition of the idiotic and imbecile children of his neighbourhood. The asylums of England and Scotland have, however, been left to the care of the humane and benevolent; and it seems evident that if anything is to be done in Ireland for the relief of the most afflicted of our fellow-beings, it must be by the private contributions of those who have been blessed with the means and dispositions to aid in the work.

In a pamphlet recently published by Mr. C. Brady, he gives an account of a visit he had made, in company with Mr. Pim and Dr. Wharton, to the English and Scotch institutions, and ably advocates the claims of the feeble-minded and idiotic for strenuous efforts for the amelioration of their condition;<sup>b</sup> and in the pages of *The Dublin Quarterly Journal of Medical Science* (Feb., 1865) I have myself appealed to my professional brethren for their aid and support. I now venture to appeal to the public at large, with the hope that, by laying before them a brief account of some of the institutions that have been established elsewhere; of the means adopted in them for developing, training, and educating the mental and physical powers of the idiotic and imbecile; and some instances of the beneficial results that have been obtained, it will no longer be allowed to remain as a reproach to Irishmen that we have been out-run by other nations in this work of benevolence.

According to the last census there are 7,033 idiots in Ireland, of whom, on the day on which the census was taken, 403 were in asylums for lunatics, 21 in prisons, 934 in workhouses, 5,675 at large, either wanderers, mendicants, or under the care of their friends. Dr. Wise has obtained further returns from the Registrar-General for Ireland, showing that in 1861 there were 470 idiots returned as being under ten years of age, 618 between ten and fifteen years, and 805 between fifteen and twenty years, giving a total of 1,893 at an educationable age. It is stated that 1,099 idiots had received a certain amount of education, and it may be fairly assumed that these belonged to the higher classes; but, even deducting these from the 7,033, we have some six thousand idiots in Ireland for whom nothing has been done to ameliorate their

<sup>a</sup> Observations on the Claims of Infirm and Imbecile Children on Public Attention. By Thomas A. Wise, M.D., &c. Cork: Bradford. 1865.

<sup>b</sup> The Training of Idiotic and Feeble-minded Children. By Cheyne Brady, Esq., M.R.I.A. Dublin: Hodges and Smith. 1864.

condition, many of whom might be self-supporting, instead of which 1,358 are supported, at the expense of the ratepayers, in asylums, workhouses, and prisons, and 5,675 are at large, either as "wanderers, mendicants, or under the care of their friends," forming a fruitful source of pauperism, crime, vice, and misery. Thus, as has been well remarked by a writer in *The North British Review* (Aug., 1863):—"If we examine the question as one of political economy, and not of mere philanthropy, it seems very certain that, however costly the proper care and education of our idiots and imbeciles may be, the cost of neglecting them is, and will be, greater. We cannot with Spartan-like severity put them to death in infancy; the Commissioners in Lunacy will take care that year by year the causes of disease and death which affect them shall be obviated, and thus there will be a gradually increasing number of idiots living to be maintained, and maintained in idleness if not trained to the kind of labour they are fitted for."

It is not, however, on the grounds of political economy that I would found this appeal on behalf of the idiotic and imbecile children of Ireland, but on the grounds of Christian charity and Christian duty. These children have immortal souls, they have been made by the living God, and they have the divine spark within. The operations of this are obscured by a diseased organization which prevents its shining forth in all its glory; but these imbeciles can be taught to know and feel that there is a God above; they can be made industrious and cleanly, and they are capable of an education that will make their existence one of comparative peace and happiness. Let all, then, who have been blessed with sound minds and sound bodies assist, that an effort may be made to break the bonds which bind the dull and darkened soul; and let every parent who has no "blighted flower in his garden" evince his gratitude to God by aiding in the work.



## INSTITUTIONS FOR EDUCATING IDIOTS.

THE first educational experiments in idiocy were made by Itard, a distinguished member of the medical profession in Paris, in the beginning of the present century, on an idiot known as the "Savage of Aveyron." The French philosophers of the period were at first greatly delighted with this youth, and brought him to Paris to prove the truth of their theories, thinking that in him they had found the statue of Condillae, an animated machine, of which it was only necessary to touch the springs to call forth the operations of the intellect. But the experiment failed, as did that of the English philosophers of the previous century with "Peter the Wild Boy," who was taken in the woods of Hanover, and brought to England to settle for ever the great controversy as to innate ideas. Disgust soon replaced enthusiasm, and the unfortunate "Savage of Aveyron" was abandoned, till Itard took him as a pupil, and devoted all his energies for five years—though unsuccessfully—to his training.

It is to M. Voisin, one of the physicians of the Bicêtre, that the honour seems chiefly, if not wholly, due of having attracted attention to the various characters of idiots with a view to cultivating the fragmentary faculties existing in them. His work, *De l'Idiotie chez les Enfants*, abounds with remarks calculated to rescue the most infirm minds from neglect, and to encourage culture before giving up to despair. The other physicians to the Bicêtre sanctioned the teachings of M. Voisin; and, in 1828, M. Ferrus, chief physician to the hospital, organized a school for idiots, causing them to be taught habits of order and industry, and to be instructed in reading, writing, arithmetic, and gymnastic exercises. At the Salpêtrière M. Falret established a school for idiotic females in 1831; and, nine years later, MM. Voisin and Leuret, as physicians to the Bicêtre, organized a system of education and instruction on a greater scale; and thus the way was prepared for the systematic efforts afterwards made at the Bicêtre by M. Séguin.

In Switzerland another attempt was being made at about the same period. Here, also, a member of the medical profession, Dr. Guggenbühl, was the originator of the scheme. Called one day to examine a case of malignant disease, in one of the beautiful valleys of the higher Alps, his attention was attracted by seeing an old *crétin*, one of the class of idiots that so abound in these valleys,

attempting to pray. The sight, as he says, at once "fixed his vocation." "These stricken individuals of our race," said he, "these brethren, beaten down, are they not more worthy of our efforts than those races of animals which men strive to bring to perfection? It is not in vain formulas, but in charitable efforts, that we must find that divine love which Jesus Christ has taught us." He immediately went to work, fixed upon a mountain in the Oberland, called the Abendberg, issued appeals for subscriptions, and soon received sufficient funds for the support of twenty children, to whose moral and physical development he consecrated all his efforts.

In Great Britain—though Dr. Poole, of Aberdeen, had advocated the expediency of subjecting idiotic children to medical treatment and educational training in an article on Education which appeared in the *Encyclopedia Edinensis* in 1819, and was subsequently published separately—it was not till 1846 that any practical effort was made, when the Misses White opened a small asylum at Bath for four pupils. These ladies, who had become acquainted with the system of instruction practised at Dr. Guggenbühl's institution at Abendberg, assisted by a few friends, took a house in Walcot-parade, Bath, where four pupils were placed under the care of a matron, who succeeded in benefiting the children beyond expectation. At the close of 1848 the number of pupils amounted to fifteen, and their progress continued to be gratifying. In 1851 the institution was removed to its present locality near Belvedere, a more airy and elevated situation. The number of pupils is now twenty-four, and the committee are anxious to extend their operations.

At the same time that the work was so unostentatiously commenced in Bath an article appeared in *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal*, January, 1847, giving an account of M. Séguin's operations at the Bicêtre. This attracted the attention of a lady in London who had an idiot son, and she applied to her minister, the well known philanthropist, Dr. Reed of Hackney, for advice as to placing her child at the Bicêtre. The difficulties in the way, however, were insuperable; and, not being aware of the existence of the school at Bath, she urged Dr. Reed, who had already established three orphan asylums, to undertake the founding of a training institution for idiots in England. That the idea was not new to Dr. Reed is shown by his diary. "So early as his birthday, November 27, 1837," his sons tell us in their memoir of him, "he is discovered in secret meditation on the wants of the most afflicted class in the human family. Both in Wales and in Cornwall he had seen the wretched idiot chained,

like a felon or a maniac, in the common pound or lock-up house of the village green, or chased hither and thither the scoff and the out-cast of the whole hamlet;" and he had noted some reflections on their condition. He soon set about the work; he made enquiries; he read the works of M. Séguin and of Scott; and, falling in with Dr. Conolly's admirable report of a visit to the Bicêtre, he at once sought counsel of him. Mr. Gervis, a well known surgeon at Tiverton, was also applied to. This gentleman had been written to by the same lady that had moved Dr. Reed to take up the subject, and his reply seemed so important and so much to the purpose that it was published in the periodicals of the day, where it struck the note of sympathy in some kindred spirits who were found ready for prompt and united action. Among others Mr. Millard became interested and was soon invited to join his efforts with the others. Dr. Reed now visited several of the continental institutions, and returning gained the confidence of friends by the conclusive nature of the evidence he presented as to the success attending their operations. A committee was organized, and an old mansion at Highgate, called Park House, large enough to contain seventy-five pupils was procured and opened as an asylum. Dr. Reed had the great honour of becoming the first benefactor to his infant charity, the second subscriber being the widowed mother of the idiot child before referred to, who in gratitude contributed her ten guineas.

The asylum was opened on the 26th of April, 1848, and seventeen pupils were admitted on the first day, which number was increased to twenty-seven within a week.

The results of the first few months were graphically described in the Report of the Board for 1850, as follows:—

"It is their privilege to speak of effects partially realized, and in some instances of a marked and delightful character. It has been their happiness to observe the eye that had no useful sight begin to see; the ear, to relish sweet sounds; the tongue that was dumb, begin to articulate the language of men; and the limb that was crippled or inert, put forth to useful and active service. In some cases bad habits have been overcome; power has been created for the care of the person; the body has been brought under the control of the will; and both have become subject to a mild authority. The power of imitation has been fostered; music and drawing are beginning to find their place in the school; reading, writing, and even figures—which are the severest test to the weak mind—are now



claiming general attention. Above all, the moral affections have been exercised; and the effects are found in the harmony of the family, and the greater readiness of the mind to recognize and worship an invisible and gracious Presence.

“Indeed, the actual change to those who have the means of making the comparison is exceedingly striking. Dr. Conolly, looking on it with a professional eye, lately remarked that it was so great in six months that he could hardly suppose the persons to be the same; and all who know what it was at first, and what it is now, will be prepared to confirm this assurance.

“In fact, the first gathering of the idiotic family was a spectacle unique in itself, sufficiently discouraging to the most resolved, and not to be forgotten in after time by any. It was a period of distraction, disorder, and noise of the most unnatural character. Some had defective sight; *most* had defective or no utterance; *most* were lame in limb or muscle; and all were of weak and perverted mind. Some had been spoiled, some neglected, and some ill-used. Some were clamorous and rebellious; some were sullen and perverse; and some unconscious and inert. Some were screaming at the top of the voice; some making constant and involuntary noises from nervous irritation; and some, terrified at scorn and ill-treatment, hid themselves in a corner from the face of man, as the face of an enemy. Windows were smashed, wainscoting broken, boundaries defied; and the spirit of mischief and disobedience prevailed. It seemed as though nothing less than the accommodation of a prison would meet the wants of such a family. Some who witnessed the scene retired from it in disgust, and others in despair.

“How very different the impression is at present many can testify. There is now order, obedience to authority, classification, improvement, and cheerful occupation. Every hour has its duties; and these duties are steadily fulfilled. Windows are now safe, boundaries are observed without walls, and doors are safe without locks. The desire now is, not to get away, but to stay. They are essentially not only an improving, but a *happy family*. And all this is secured without the aid of *correction* or *coercion*. The principle which rules in the House is LOVE—CHARITY—DIVINE CHARITY.”

In 1850 the committee obtained, on extremely liberal terms, from Sir S. Morton Peto,<sup>a</sup> a large house, near Colchester, called Essex

<sup>a</sup> Mr. Millard gives the following account of this:—“Park House was visited by the kind friend to the cause previously referred to, who remarked, whilst observing the

Hall, to which two other houses were added, enabling them to accommodate 195 pupils; they soon afterwards procured the estate of Earlswood, and determined to build an institution where they could have all their pupils in one establishment, and have proper facilities for classifying, educating, and training them. The foundation stone of this building was laid by Prince Albert in July, 1853.

“The consent of the late Prince Consort was obtained to lay the foundation-stone of the new asylum in July, 1853; and successful preparations were made for the auspicious event. Collecting purses had been issued to a large number of ladies, who agreed to collect five guineas and upwards, and place them upon the stone; whilst several gentlemen were to follow with cheques of one hundred guineas and upwards. The leading families in the neighbourhood for several miles round were waited upon and invited to attend the ceremony. Special trains were engaged to bring visitors to a temporary platform near the estate, and a procession was arranged, of which the programme was published. The weather proved delightful; half-a-crown admission tickets were readily disposed of, and a large company assembled. The Bishop of Oxford, surrounded by many of the clergy, offered up the appropriate prayers that had been prepared for the occasion; and, amidst the enthusiastic shouts of the delighted throng, the late Prince Consort, with his accustomed dexterity, completed the process of laying the stone, accepting as a memento the silver trowel which he had used, and which was tastefully engraved. The purses and cheques were duly laid upon the stone, and graciously acknowledged by His Royal Highness. The contributions were calculated to amount to nearly ten thousand pounds, including, of course, sums that had long been promised for the purpose.”

In 1855 Prince Albert presided at the opening of the asylum, which is capable of accommodating 400 pupils, and in the evening of the opening day Lord Wodehouse, at the dinner in the city, the

boys at their drilling, ‘How thankful we ought to be that our children are not like these;’ and eventually he offered to the Committee the use of Essex Hall, Colechester, for which a rental of £320 per annum was to be paid to the Mortgagees, but towards which sum he agreed by a clause in the lease to give an annual subscription of £200. It has been previously stated that he purchased nearly six acres of land round the building, at a cost of £1,000, for which no rent was to be paid; and he agreed to lend £1,000 free of interest for five years, to furnish the house; which sum was generously given at one of the annual festivals to the Institution, as a donation, about three years after he had advanced the money.”

ceremony so usual in London for raising funds for charities, and "the cause of the idiot that night rejoiced in the accession of powerful friends." Essex Hall was re-opened subsequently as a local institution for the Eastern Counties, and Mr. Millard concludes his history<sup>a</sup> of the two institutions as follows:—

"The reflection is gratifying, that in these two institutions nearly 500 feeble-minded ones are daily cared for in a manner adapted to promote their progress, comfort, and happiness, being protected from the scorn of the proud and the ridicule of the thoughtless; and trained for that better world, where, with unclouded faculties, they will study the works of their Heavenly Father, admire the mysterious leadings of Providence in their behalf, and find free scope for that love to their Saviour, often manifested unmistakably here. An adult pupil, who died at Essex Hall, used to say to his friends, with his finger pointing to heaven, 'I want to stay here until I go there.'"

The Western Counties of England are at present building an asylum for themselves, under the auspices of the Earl of Devon, which will shortly be opened, and will be fitted to receive twenty-one pupils, and the Northern Counties are also about to build one for themselves. This last was commenced by a member of the Society of Friends, who called on Dr. De Vitré of Lancaster, and expressed a wish that something of the kind could be accomplished, offering to give a subscription of £2,000 for the purpose, but with a request that his name should be as little mentioned as possible. Dr. De Vitré felt staggered at first by the large amount placed at his disposal; but "As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth a man the countenance of his friend," and this most excellent and munificent offer becoming known, touched many springs of benevolence. Further sums were offered by others; a committee was formed; and though the matter was only made public on the 3rd of November, 1864, the subscriptions acknowledged up to the 27th of March amounted to more than £19,800, and they have no doubt considerably increased since then.

In Scotland the first practical efforts for the imbecile were made by Sir John and Lady Jane Ogilvy, who erected an asylum, at

<sup>a</sup>The Idiot and his Helpers: A Brief History of the Essex Hall, Earlswood, and other Asylums in England and Scotland for the Idiot and Imbecile. By W. Millard. London: Simpkin and Co.

their own expense, on their estate at Baldovan, near Dundee. It was opened in 1854, and can receive forty pupils, who pay sums varying from £13 10s. per annum. None are admitted after thirteen years of age; the most improvable are preferred; and, as the low charges made for most of the pupils are insufficient to defray the expenses, the deficit is made up by voluntary subscription. At Larbert, near Falkirk, there is another institution, which owes its origin to the self-denying labours of Dr. and Mrs. Brodie. It was first opened in the year 1855, in Edinburgh; then removed to the suburbs; and, in 1861, the committee took ground at Larbert, and commenced to erect an institution capable of accommodating 200 children.

In America the duty of educating imbecile children has been more fully recognized than in any other country; and large State grants are made for the purpose. Dr. Howe, of Boston, the well-known instructor of Laura Bridgman, gratuitously superintends the school for Massachusetts.

The late Lady Harburton, who devoted so much time and personal effort to the advancement of education, was deeply impressed with the possibility of educating idiots, and in the schools which she established in Gloucester-street many idiots and weak-minded children were taught to read and understand, about whom even the most hopeful might well have despaired as to the possibility of conveying ideas to their minds. Beyond isolated efforts of this kind no provision whatever has been made in Ireland for the instruction of improvable idiots. How true, yet not more severe than deserved, is the reproach, "That even the dumb animal has been treated with more consideration: for we have, very properly, societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals; and the sentimental philanthropy of an eccentric lady has founded a refuge in London for the reception of wandering dogs."



## THE METHODS OF TRAINING AND EDUCATING IDIOTS.

It can scarcely be wondered at, that, when the question of educating idiots is first presented to many, their impulse should be to regard it as impossible—and impossible it certainly would be if only those methods were adopted which are used with sound children even in the most elementary schools; but a consideration of the very peculiar and special means that are put in use for the purpose, will soon prepare the mind to give full credence to the statements that are made as to the very great success that has been obtained

When healthy children first leave the nursery and go to school, they may be said to enter on the second stage of their education. Hitherto they had been learning the use of their limbs and of the several parts of their bodies, training their senses to perceive, notice, and recognize the objects around them; and they had been gradually gaining muscular strength and activity. In teaching idiots, these are the points that must first be attended to. They are ignorant of the uses of the several parts of their own bodies; though they see they do not recognize; they hear without perceiving; and their bodily health is such that they require most carefully directed treatment to strengthen their frames and develop and educate their muscular powers. M. Sèguin has published a treatise<sup>a</sup> describing very minutely the plans he was led to adopt at the Bicêtre. From this work the following sketch is taken. He writes with all the eloquence and ardour of an enthusiast; but the task of educating such pupils is one that none but an enthusiast could accomplish; and he has carried out his plans with such steadiness and judgment as to procure a very large amount of success.

The common opinion that idiots are incurable is, M. Sèguin says, false; but their condition is greatly aggravated by neglect. All those cares, without which children well gifted could not have attained the dignity of manhood, are but too often withheld; they receive no kind forethought, no enlightened affection, no plan of

<sup>a</sup> *Traitement Moral Hygiène et Education des Idiots et des Autres Enfants Arriérés.* Paris: Baillière. 1846. A very full analysis of this work appeared in the *British and Foreign Medical Review* for July, 1847.

education, no methodical treatment. The ignorant are condemned to ignorance, the inert to inertia, the idiot to perpetual idiocy; till, left to their instincts, their inertness, their nervous disorders, and filthy and repulsive habits, they become incurable, and, growing old prematurely, die at thirty. Yet idiots have been made good, active, intelligent, and, to a certain point, useful to their relatives and to society; and it is impossible to say, *à priori*, what cases are incurable. The trial must first be made. Neither the smallness of the head, nor the hydrocephalic enlargement, are signs on which any opinion as to the result can be formed. The most unpromising cases are those attended with general paralysis, or with hemiplegia, chorea, and epilepsy. But it is only after the failure of assiduous means that even these cases can be pronounced incurable; for proper treatment often ameliorates or removes these complications, and thus benefits the disease. M. Séguin affirms that the number of idiots incapable of profiting by his method of education is exceedingly small, and that he has not found more than two per cent. with whom the means he has used have not produced results more or less satisfactory.

Convinced that the due performance of the bodily functions is essential to the healthy action of the mind, M. Séguin attaches primary importance to hygienic treatment, and lays down rules for this, for the most part well considered. The special education is intimately connected with the hygienic treatment, and ought to comprehend—1st, the active powers; 2nd, the intellect; 3rd, the will. Of these the education of the active powers, including motion and sensation, ought to precede that of the intellect; which, in like manner, must precede that of the will; and, to be successful, the system must be commenced at a very early age.

The education of the active powers includes that of the muscles and the nervous system, and is to be carried out by gymnastic exercises—the object being, the exercise of force during a fixed time, rather than sudden or violent exertions, which might prove injurious to children with feeble spinal columns. A table, a balance, a ladder, and dumb-bells only are required; and the child is made to pass, by gradual degrees, from exercises purely physical to physiological; or, to speak plainly, from exercises of muscular mobility to those of the senses. The methods adopted by M. Séguin are founded on those described in the *Manuel de Gymnastique* of M. Amoros; but the balance—which is a bar of wood, with wooden knobs at each end, and weighted according to the strength of the

child—is his own invention. When the idiot cannot, or will not stand, or use his hands to support himself, he is placed on the ladder, and M. Séguin, holding him by his belt with one hand, with the other directs his feet to mount or descend. When he does not hold the steps of the ladder he is allowed to drop into the arms of an attendant, and replaced on it. If this do not suffice M. Séguin mounts on the front of the ladder, and places the child behind it, holding his hands in his own; then, disengaging the child's feet with one of his own, he holds him suspended from the upper steps, assisting him to hold it, as may be necessary. Then he disengages one of the hands, when the child instinctively seizes on a lower step, and thus, by a series of graduated exercises, he educates the powers of prehension, and stimulates the development of the muscles. As soon as the child begins to use his hands he is taught to feed himself, and to handle various objects, as stones, bricks, pickaxes, spades, barrows, &c.—these last being specially useful, because of the necessity of balancing them when using them. Some are so weak as to be unable to stand, and are placed sitting on a spring-board, on which they are moved up and down; some cannot even sit, and the exercises must be varied according to their wants. Defects of motion in three forms may have to be treated—1st, want of muscular power; 2nd, defective power of will; 3rd, defects of structure, as contractions and retractions.

Imitation holds an important place in all the acts of life, and may be made a valuable agent in the education of idiots. M. Séguin treats of it under two heads, personal and impersonal; the first applying to the individual's own acts and habits; the second, when it relates to his actions on outward things. Some children possess the faculty of personal imitation in an extraordinary degree; and, when this is not cultivated, it leads to habits of contortions and grimaces, and the movements become of a spasmodic character. Sometimes the gestures and expressions have nothing remarkable in themselves; but, by the frequency of their repetition and inappropriateness, reveal idiocy. Others are at times violent; and, by the movements of their features, especially their lips, and by their voice, imitate animals. This power of imitation can be put to most useful purposes, but to do so requires time and patience; the movements must be controlled, and others, diametrically opposite to them, provoked. The first step is to procure complete repose of the muscles, which must be done in diverse manners, but always by the double method of authority and imitation. M. Séguin details



the case of a child, indomitably petulant, clambering like a cat, escaping like a monkey; he could not be kept still for three seconds. He put him in a chair and sat opposite to him, holding his feet and knees between his own; with one of his hands he fixed those of the child on his knees, and with the other he incessantly brought before him his movable face. They remained thus for *five weeks*, meal and bed times excepted, after which the child began to stand, and almost immovably.

When repose of the muscles has been obtained the next step is to commence exercises of imitation. The child is taught, by gesture and word, to know the several parts of his body, and their uses, of which idiots are generally ignorant. Then he is taught which hand to use in eating, and so is led to perceive the difference between right and left, and is induced to copy the movements of his teacher in closing and opening the hands, moving the fingers, assuming attitudes, &c.—lessons which are most effectual in classes. Impersonal imitation is the next stage; he is led to repeat the movements of his teacher, who places objects in common use in different positions. The teacher takes a plate, and places it on the table, telling the child to take another and do the same; and so on, bricks, squares, and triangles are made into various forms, and at last the child is made to draw lines with chalk on a black board.

The muscles having been brought into training, the next object is to exercise and educate the nervous system and the organs of the senses, which is indispensable to, and must precede, all attempts at the education of the intellect. The senses are to be educated in the following order:—Touch, sight, hearing, taste, and smell; that is the order in which they are awakened in the healthy child.

Touch is the first of all our senses, and that which gives the greatest certainty. Of all our senses it is that which is most neglected in education. With idiots it is often the most depraved. Some have the sense of touch, but no power of perception; others have neither the sense nor the perception. In the first case it is necessary to awake the consciousness; in the others the sensation itself must be provoked before the attention of the mind can be given to it. In the first case it is important to associate hearing and sight with touch; in the second the touch must be roused by energetic and varied shocks, by agents whose actions are opposite, such as heat and cold. The education of the senses of taste and smell must be accomplished on the same principle as that of touch. Hearing is seldom deficient; and almost all idiots take pleasure in



music, and are able to appreciate it—many are strongly influenced by it. Energetic gay tunes affect them more than slow and grave ones, and instrumental music has more influence on them than vocal.

M. Séguin mentions several cases in which he was able to teach idiots to speak distinctly, though they had been able to pronounce simple sounds or syllables of two letters only; but his directions on this head do not admit of a sufficient condensation for insertion here.

The sense of sight is that which requires the most methodical training. The other senses can be acted on directly, and their appropriate stimuli brought into relation with their organs; but the situation, delicacy, and mobility of the eye render it inaccessible to all direct influence. Three modes may, however, be employed for this sense:—

1. Place the child in a dark room, where there may be made to appear a luminous point, on which something may be traced that will be agreeable to the child. This light ought to be moved about so as to fix and draw after it the hitherto wandering and vacant eye.

2. Throw the balance backwards and forwards, so that the energetic movements may attract the eye.

3. Place the child before you, and follow his wandering eye with a firm and obstinate look. The intelligent and animated eye follows the inactive eye, arrests it, fixes it, and then directs it. But this exercise, easy of description, is often very difficult to execute. The child struggles; your look seeks his, he avoids you; you follow, he again escapes; you wait, he closes his eyelids. For four months M. Séguin tried to fix the wandering eye of one child. The first time their eyes met, the child uttered a great cry; the next day, instead of the child passing his hand over him, as he had ordinarily done, to assure himself of his identity, he looked at him as something new. The next day he prolonged his looks, with intelligence; and the expressions of curiosity and astonishment ceasing, he looked and saw like all the rest of the world; and, by speaking to him when his sight was roused, he looked afterwards when spoken to, and thus his hearing was improved. When the eye has been fixed, lessons in colour, dimensions, configuration, arrangement, and order succeed, from which the progress to drawing is more easy; but still, patience and perseverance must be the rule. In one case it took a fortnight to teach a child to draw a straight line.

From drawing geometrical figures the idiot passes to forming letters; thus D is only a half circle resting on a vertical line, A two oblique lines united at their summits and divided by a horizontal line. The next proceeding is to learn the names of letters. A frame is constructed in which each letter of the alphabet is placed, painted on cards, to each of which a metal letter exactly corresponds. Two or three metal letters are placed before the child, and he is directed to place one at a time on the corresponding letter in the frame, the teacher naming them; subsequently a letter being shown to him he is told to name it; if at first he were told to name it as well as place it he would be puzzled. He thus connects a name with a figure and a figure with a name. Letters being understood, syllables are to be mastered, or the relation between sound and many signs, and also the relation of many signs with many successive articulations. Here the previous lessons assist him. The idiot who has placed two bricks to form one figure is led to comprehend how two letters can form one sound. To connect words with objects and ideas, card letters forming the word are placed on the object (bread, knife, &c.), then the object is given to the child that he may find its name among the several names placed before him.

The more truly intellectual processes are next taught, as memory, reasoning, provision, and forethought; and the education that has been attained is applied to the common actions of life—as decency, bodily habits, attitudes, walking, dressing, eating, the cultivation of tastes, and work. Obedience is next taught, but for this no other means but words, gestures, and looks should be employed. From subordinating the idiot's will to his own the master next induces or excites him to act for himself. The favourable moment of transition must be watched and seized—it cannot be hastened. It is infallibly indicated by two signs—usually simultaneous—the absence of all resistance to authority and some spontaneous wish for an active and intelligent occupation. After the first spontaneous act of an intelligent kind the immediate imperative authority should be gradually discontinued, and the idiot should be induced and excited to obey, through the means of his tastes, preferences, ideas, and feelings.

Games hold a high place in the education of idiots; M. Séguin mixes with his pupils as their playfellow, though he imperceptibly directs their games. A game is the most spontaneous act of infancy; it is more, it is the free and voluntary accomplishment of a bodily and mental function; an idiot who can play almost deserves

another name. The choice of games lies with the children, their variation and graduation with the master, who should take care that the game should not become a mere routine, but that there should be always something to learn—at first the games that please his taste, afterwards those most useful. Thus, when there is inability to direct the eye, the bow and arrow; for difficulty in the motions of the hand, or involuntary contractions, the battledore; for unsteady gait, the wheelbarrow, &c.

The idiot has now arrived at that stage that he can execute all voluntary movements, he can read and write; whatever his master energetically wills he can do; but he cannot act on persons or things by his own free will, he cannot spontaneously will. Before acting on persons he must begin on things, and as the prehension of food is one of the first voluntary acts, the master may begin to exercise the will with this:—The cloth is laid; you sit down, says M. Séguin, so does he; everything is in its place, but the middle of the table is empty; he remarks it, and you should not remark it before he does. He calls the servant; there is none. Where is the meat? he asks; you wait, he goes to find the dish. At first it is placed on the sideboard, where the aroma of roast meat attracts him, another day in the passage, then in the kitchen. The same with the bread and wine. Next the meat is there, but no plate, no fork, no spoon; he is compelled, in the same quiet way, to exert his own thought and seek them. Thus, if his health permit, a meal may last several hours; but the time is not mis-spent if he learns to think. At a later period he must have nothing for dinner that he has not ordered in the morning, or purchased himself beforehand. In like manner he is obliged to think and make arrangements with regard to his clothes. To establish his relations with persons he is led to feel some want or wish that they can satisfy.

That these plans of education are well adapted to the purpose for which they are intended must be apparent to all who consider them; and they have been successful beyond all that the most ardent could have hoped for. Subsequent experience, and the acquisition of facilities for the purpose, have led to the pupils being more employed at industrial occupations than M. Séguin attempted, but in the main his directions are closely followed in the education of these hitherto most helpless and neglected pupils.



## RESULTS.

HAVING thus sketched the growth of institutions and the methods adopted for educating idiots, it remains to adduce evidence as to their efficacy in accomplishing the purpose for which they are intended. In some respects this is a difficult task, but the difficulty arises, not from the lack of evidence, but from its overwhelming amount, and the necessity of keeping the statement of it within narrow limits. Perhaps the enthusiastic zeal for the furtherance of the work, excited in the minds of all who have personally visited and examined the schools and the system of education, is the most convincing proof that could be given. Dr. Howe, who so successfully educated the girl who was blind as well as deaf and dumb, was one of the commissioners sent by the American Government to report on the workings of the several European institutions, and on his return he undertook gratuitously the superintendence of the Massachusetts school. Dr. Conolly—no mean observer, and a man not likely to be carried away by vain enthusiasm—by his description of what he saw at the Bicêtre gave a great impulse to Dr. Reed's exertions, and afterwards became one of his chief supporters in founding, and is now honorary secretary to, the National Asylum at Earlswood. Dr. Wise, when residing in Edinburgh, was one of the visiting committee of the Scottish asylum, and is now the ardent advocate of the claims on public attention of the infirm and imbecile children of Ireland. Mr. Pim, Mr. Brady, and Dr. Wharton visited the English and Scotch schools, and now demand that the Irish children shall no longer be neglected.

In 1842 the Conseil d'Administration des Hôpitaux reported in such terms on the success of M. Séguin's plans that the Government placed increased facilities at his disposal for carrying them out. Before this Esquirol and Guersant testified that in eighteen months he taught an idiot "to use his senses to remember, to compare, to speak, to write, to count." In 1843 the Académie Royale des Sciences appointed a committee, consisting of MM. Serres, Flourens, and Pariset, to examine into his plans and the progress of his pupils, who conclude their report by saying—"M. Séguin has then opened a new career to benevolence; he has given to hygiene, to medicine, to moral philosophy, *an example most worthy to be followed.*" In the report, presented in 1847 to the House of Representatives of



Massachusetts by the commission appointed to inquire into the condition of idiots in the Commonwealth, we find further evidence of success, in a letter from Mr. George Sumner, a gentleman of admirable qualifications as a discriminating observer, as well as a genuine philanthropist. The following extract gives a general summary of the results of his enquiries—results not hastily caught up, but gathered as the fruit of prolonged and watchful attention:—

“During the past six months I have watched with eager interest the progress which many young idiots have made, in Paris, under the direction of M. Séguin, and, at the Bicêtre, under that of Messrs. Voisin and Vallée; and have seen, with no less gratification than astonishment, nearly one hundred fellow-beings who, but a short time since, were shut out from all communion with mankind,—who were objects of loathing and disgust,—many of whom rejected every article of clothing,—others of whom, unable to stand erect, crouched themselves in corners and gave signs of life only by piteous howls,—others, in whom the faculty of speech had never been developed,—and many, whose voracious and indiscriminate gluttony satisfied itself with whatever they could lay hands upon—with the garbage thrown to swine, or with their own excrements;—these unfortunate beings—the rejected of humanity—I have seen properly clad, standing erect, walking, speaking, eating in an orderly manner at a common table, working quietly as carpenters and farmers; gaining, by their own labour, the means of existence; storing their awakened intelligence by reading one to another; exercising, towards their teachers and among themselves, the generous feelings of man's nature, and singing, in unison, songs of thanksgiving.

“It is a miracle, you will exclaim; and so, indeed, it is,—a miracle of intelligence, of patience, and of love. . . . .

“The fact, I have said, is now clearly established, that idiots may be educated,—that the reflective power exists within them, and may be awakened by a proper system of instruction; that they may be raised, from the filth in which they grovel, to the attitude of men; that they may be taught different arts which will enable them to gain an honest livelihood, and that, although their intelligence may never, perhaps, be developed to such a point as to render them the authors of those generous ideas and great deeds which leave a stamp upon an age, yet, still, they may attain a respectable mediocrity, and surpass, in mental power, the common peasant of many European states.”

Mr. Brady describes in his pamphlet the results of his observations as affording a satisfactory demonstration that

“Bad habits have been corrected;

“The senses have been educated;

“To many who could not articulate the faculty of speech has been imparted;

“The muscular and physical powers have been improved;

“Some have been trained to industrial pursuits, so as to be able to earn a livelihood;

“The intellect has been developed;

“The moral feelings have been aroused;

“And, above all, the veil which bedimmed the soul has been rendered transparent, so that the light of truth has illuminated the darkened understanding of the poor idiot.”

In his *Letters on the Lunatic Asylums of Paris* Dr. Conolly dwells with peculiar pleasure on what he saw in the department for idiots. Writing of the Bicêtre, he says:—

“I was accompanied round this asylum by M. Battelle, and by M. Mallon, the director, and had afterwards an opportunity of hearing from himself the exposition of the views of one of its able physicians, M. Voisin, whose singular zeal in the cause of the idiotic class of patients has caused difficulties to be overcome which appeared at first to be insurmountable. The first part of the Bicêtre to which I was conducted was a school exclusively established for the improvement of these cases and of the epileptic, and nothing more extraordinary can well be imagined. No fewer than forty of these patients were assembled in a moderate sized school-room, receiving various lessons and performing various evolutions under the direction of a very able schoolmaster, M. Séguin, himself a pupil of the celebrated Itard, and endowed with that enthusiasm respecting his occupation before which difficulties vanish. His pupils had been all taught to sing to music; and the little band of violins and other instruments, by which they were accompanied, was formed of the old almsmen of the hospital. But all the *idiotic* part of this remarkable class also sung without any musical accompaniment, and kept excellent time and tune. They sung several compositions, and, among others, a very pretty song, written for them by M. Battelle, and sung by them on entering the class-room. Both the epileptic and idiotic were taught to write, and their copy-books would have done credit

to any writing-school for young persons. Numerous exercises were gone through, of a kind of military character, with perfect correctness and precision. The youngest of the class was a little idiot boy of five years old; and it was interesting to see him following the rest, and imitating their actions, holding out his right arm, left arm, both arms, marching to the right and left, at the word of command, and to the sound of a drum beaten with all the lively skill of a French drummer by another idiot, who was gratified by wearing a demi-military uniform. All these exercises were gone through by a collection of beings offering the smallest degree of intellectual promise, and usually left, in all asylums, in total indolence and apathy. Among them was one youth whose intellectual deficiency was marked in every look, gesture, and feature. I think a more particular account of this poor boy's progress deserving of record, as an inducement to the philanthropist to enter on a new field of instruction presenting many difficulties, but yet not unproductive of results.

"In the school for idiots and epileptics at the Bicêtre, a careful register is kept of the psychological condition of each pupil, according to a printed form, for the examination of their instinctive, moral, intellectual, and perceptive state. I was obligingly furnished with a copy of the register relative to the subject of my immediate observations, *Charles Emile*, and also with a copy of the *résumé*, or summary, of his case, made by M. Voisin himself.

"The age of Charles Emile is fifteen; he was admitted to the school in June, 1813. He is described as being of a nervous and sanguine temperament, and in an almost complete state of idiocy—the faculties which remain being in a state of extraordinary activity, and rendering him dangerous to himself and to others; but still idiotic in his inclinations, sentiments, perceptions, faculties of perception, and understanding, and also of his senses, of which some were obtuse, and others too excitable. He was consequently unfit, to use the words of M. Voisin, 'to harmonize with the world without.' As regards his *inclinations*, he was signalized by a voracious, indiscriminate, gluttonous appetite, *un érotisme hideux*, and a blind and terrible instinct of destruction. He was wholly an animal. He was without attachment, overturned everything in his way, but without courage or intent; possessed no tact, intelligence, power of dissimulation, or sense of property; and was awkward to excess. His *moral sentiments* are described as *null*, except the love of approbation, and a noisy, instinctive gaiety, independent of the external



world. As to his *senses*, his eyes were never fixed, and seemed to act without his will; his taste was depraved; his touch obtuse; his ear recognized sounds, but was not attracted by any sound in particular: and he scarcely seemed to be possessed of the sense of smell. Devouring everything however disgusting; brutally sensual; passionate—breaking, tearing, and burning whatever he could lay his hands upon; and if prevented from doing so, pinching, biting, scratching, and tearing himself, until he was covered with blood. He had the particularity of being so attracted by the eyes of his brothers, sisters, and playfellows, as to make the most persevering efforts to push them out with his fingers. He walked very imperfectly, and could neither run, leap, nor exert the act of throwing; sometimes he sprang like a leopard, and his delight was to strike one sonorous body against another. When any attempt was made to associate him with the other patients he would start away with a sharp cry, and then come back to them hastily. M. Voisin's description concludes with these expressions:—'All the faculties of perception in this youth are in a rudimentary state; and, if I may venture so to express myself, it is incredibly difficult to draw him out of his individuality, to place him before exterior objects, and to make him take any notice of them. It would not be far from truth to say, that for him all nature is almost completely veiled.'

"This description not only exemplifies M. Voisin's careful mode of observation, but shows that an example of idiocy less favourable to culture could scarcely have been presented to the instructor. This same poor idiot boy is now docile in his manners, decent in his habits, and capable, though not without some visible effort, of directing his vague senses and wandering attention, so as to have developed his memory, to have acquired a limited instruction concerning various objects, and to have become affectionately conscious of the presence of his instructors and friends. His general appearance is still that of an idiot. His countenance, his mode of walking, all that he does, declare his very limited faculties. Nature has placed limits to the exercise of his powers which no art can remove. But he is redeemed from the constant dominion of the lowest animal propensities; several of his intellectual faculties are cultivated, some have even been called into life, and his better feelings have acquired some objects and some exercise. In such a case as this we are not so much to regard what is merely accomplished for the individual. A great principle is established by it in favour of thousands of defective organizations. After witnessing the



general efforts of this school of the most imbecile human beings, and hearing the particulars of Charles Emile's history, it was really affecting to see him come forward when called, and essay to sing a little solo when requested; his attempt at first not being quite successful, but amended by his attention being more roused to it. His copy-book was then shown to me, and his writing was steady, and as good as that of most youths of his station in life. The schoolmaster, who seemed to take great pleasure in the improvement of this poor fellow, then showed us how he had taught Charles to count, by means of marbles and small pieces of wood, or marks made on a board, arranged in lines, the first containing an 0, the second 00, the third 000, and so on. Charles was sometimes out in his first calculations, but then made an effort and rectified himself. He distinguished one figure from another, naming their value. Large pieces of strong card, of various shapes, were placed in succession in his hands; and he named the figure of each, as square, triangle, &c., and afterwards drew their outlines, with chalk, on a black board, and, according to the desire of M. Séguin, drew a perpendicular, or horizontal, or oblique line; so effectually attending to what he was doing that if any line was drawn incorrectly he rubbed it out and began anew. He also wrote several words on the board, and the name of the director of the Bicêtre, without the name being spoken to him.

“This case was altogether the most interesting of those which I saw; but there was one poor idiot standing a great part of the time in a corner, to all appearance the very despair of art: even this poor creature, however, upon being noticed and brought to the table, proved capable of distinguishing the letters of the alphabet. Most of the others had received as much instruction as has been described, and could count, draw lines and figures, write, perform various exercises, and point to different parts of the body, as the head, the eyes, the arms, the feet, &c., when named to them. In all these cases, and pre-eminently in that of Charles Emile, the crowning glory of the attempt is, that whilst the senses, the muscular powers, and the intellect have received some cultivation, the habits have been improved, the propensities regulated, and some play has been given to the affections; so that a wild, ungovernable animal calculated to excite fear, aversion, or disgust, has been transformed into the likeness and manners of a man. It is difficult to avoid falling into the language of enthusiasm on beholding such an apparent miracle; but the means of its performance are simple, demanding

only that rare perseverance without which nothing good or great is ever effected; and suitable space, and local arrangements adapted to the conservation of the health and safety of the pupils; to the establishment of cleanly habits; to presenting them with objects for the exercise of their faculties of sense, motion, and intellect; and to the promotion of good feelings and a cheerful active disposition. The idiot who is capable of playing and amusing himself is already, as M. Séguin observes, somewhat improved.<sup>a</sup> I can but regret that I had not time to watch the progress of this interesting school from day to day, and to trace the growth of knowledge in the different pupils; as of the first ideas of form and colour, into writing and drawing; the development of articulation and the power of verbal expression; the extension of memory to calculation; the subsidence of gross propensities, and the springing forth and flourishing of virtuous emotions in a soil where, if even under the most favourable circumstances the blossoms and fruits are few, but for philanthropic culture all would be noxious or utterly barren."

Dr. Conolly described what he saw so long ago as 1844, but the school at the Bicêtre is still at work, and Dr. Delasiauve, one of the physicians to the hospital, gave the following account of its operations for the past year, at a meeting for the distribution of prizes to the pupils, on the 19th of October last. Speaking of the degree of improvement that it was possible for idiots to attain to, Dr. Delasiauve observed that the mistake must be avoided of expecting too much from their education. The chief characteristic of idiocy is the weakness or absence of certain social talents which guide the life of even the most ignorant; very rare are the instances of idiots being able in any degree to learn to exercise these talents. Many of the pupils had taken, or were about to take, their places in the world; but though they were more apt than many ordinary people at reading, writing, calculating, at grammar, drawing, or at a trade, the most of them could not take care of themselves without guardians. The highest ideas of morality escape them; they allow themselves, in the absence of a sufficient support, to be depressed by the least check, to be duped by every intriguer, to be drawn unconsciously into the most deplorable errors. The greater reason, says Dr. Delasiauve, to compensate by good habits for that which is wanting in their moral equilibrium. It is in this spirit of

<sup>a</sup> Hygiène et Education des Idiots. Par Edouard Séguin. Paris, 1843.

reserve that the progress of these unfortunate beings is to be considered—a relative progress, and which, however small it may be, is always to be regarded in a philosophic and humane point of view as a wonder and a conquest. Dr. Delasianve stated that the number of idiots in the institution was 109. Of these thirteen were confined to the infirmary by severe and incurable disease, and ninety-six, or about six-sevenths of the whole number, were found to be susceptible of education. They are divided into two classes, of which the management is confided to a teacher, M. Deleporte; the principal or senior class includes sixty-six pupils, the junior has thirty. There are great difficulties to be encountered in the education of the junior class. To rouse the torpor of the stupid, to repress the petulance of the mobile, and to obviate the perverse tendencies of many of these, almost entirely occupies the time of two assistants who have them in charge. Yet marked improvements have been accomplished—their general aspect has been improved, their animation has become greater, and their complexion more healthy, in consequence not only of their being restricted from unclean habits, but of their marchings and rhythmical movements of the limbs, exercises that they practise many times a-day. A score of them carry and arrange objects, or try little games. Ten or twelve commence to spell, to put together simple unities, to hum airs, or even to sing songs, to individualize themselves, to clothe themselves, to name and distinguish substances, indicating their qualities and their uses. Some of them by their answers show the thoughts that reflection has suggested to them. Of this class some have passed, and others will soon follow into a higher. M. Deleporte has been able, by skilful groupings in this higher class, to obtain order, calmness, and steady work. In the first division of it, comprising sixteen pupils, divided, according to their abilities, into two classes, under proper assistants, the subjects taught are those of the best elementary schools—reading, writing, arithmetic, rudiments of geometry, grammar, history, geography, general notions. The greater part of them spell and calculate, not merely by intuition, but by aiding themselves intelligently by rules. Some of them could rival the best ordinary scholars. Organised on the same plan, the second division, which contains fifteen pupils, occupies itself with the same subjects. The third, equal in numbers, confine themselves to reading, writing, and arithmetic. Four or five advanced so rapidly as to deserve to be soon admitted into the second division. The most backward, or the beginners, form for



the two sections of the fourth division a contingent of twenty-one pupils. With the least capable, only the most simple and positive ideas, by the exercise of the senses, of the memory, and of their weak conceptions, are attempted; colours, odours, flavours, sounds, tactile impressions, knowledge of the various parts of their bodies, of common objects, &c. Others learn to read, to count, to trace letters, &c. Vocalization is not forgotten, nor the cultivation of the reasoning powers, and no favourable opportunity is neglected for provoking explanations according to the degrees of intelligence of the pupils. In ordinary school-teaching it is now beginning to be understood that intellectual development is not all, and that a part ought to be accorded to corporeal and artistic aptitudes. This want is *a fortiori* imperious with regard to idiots, among whom precisely these aptitudes are sometimes most marked. Special courses have been instituted with this view. Of eleven children to whom M. Veissiere teaches drawing, three seize the likeness, three combine with tolerable exactness the contours of a head, and five are beginning with more or less of success. Thirteen pupils study scale singing under the skilful organist of the house, M. Renet, making it be desired that the benefit of the innate gift of music might be cultivated on a large scale. Dancing and fencing have their professors. Of twenty-two pupils, the dancing-master, M. Peny, counts seven good, five tolerably so, and ten who are commencing. The professor of fencing, M. Demolis, teaches eleven, of whom seven are good, and four still better. Gymnastics also, over which presides the excellent M. Goy, assistant to Laisire, continues to render most eminent services—corporeal energy, suppleness, agility, animation, affective sympathy, such are the results of a happy variety of regulated exercises. Trades would be for us a precious resource if, unfortunately, the dispersion of the workshops beyond our surveillance did not prevent our using the greater number of them. Three apprentice tailors satisfy their master, M. Chacaton. The locksmith, M. Ausermier; the joiner, M. Cotel; the wheelwright, M. Eidt; the cooper, M. Tessier; the shoemaker, M. Boufflet, have each one whom they praise. Eleven do good service in the wood yard, two as aids in the parlour, and two others in the cow-house. It is remarked that for these latter works, where a strong intellectual effort is not necessary, the zeal sustains itself, while in those which require application inconstancy is common, and demands for change are frequent. . . . X, incoercible at the locksmith's counts in the wood yard among the



most ardent. In the joiner's shop, where seven children are instructed under the direction of a good old man, many, already skilful, show this versatility. Admirable revelation for the instructor. To be exact, we must not omit to mention that we have not to deal with idiots exclusively; fifteen are epileptics, a few have both infirmities joined, five or six have been admitted as lunatics. The complication of the affections is an aggravation, but it is clear that the exercises are beneficial to the epileptics as well as to the lunatics. In the appreciation of the result, in regard to education, it is important to bear this in mind, but without exaggerating the effect, for in a review we have made of eighteen pupils, who have made notable progress, eleven are neither epileptic nor insane. For all, the benefit is immense; the double exercise of mind and body contributes not less to accelerate the cure of insanity and of the epilepsy, or at least to lessen the ravages of this, than to enlarge for the idiot the narrow field of his intelligence. These considerations, said Dr. Delasiauve, bring back our attention to the object of this ceremony. The attraction of a natural curiosity is not the sole object that ought to bring us here. A distribution of prizes implies at bottom more than that. At the same time that it is a recompense and inducement for the pupils, it is for us functionaries, physicians and instructors, an occasion for meditation and thought. At the side of the palpable advantages the desiderata become apparent to us. The base of our aspirations, in fact, lies in these words—and we ought not to lose sight of them—"L'education est le moyen, le travail est le but."

The present state of the Earlswood Asylum—as described, in his account of a "Fete Day at Earlswood, June 16, 1864," by the Rev. Edwin Sidney, rector of Cornard Parva, Suffolk, and the enthusiastic and well-known advocate of the asylum—is even more satisfactory than that of the school at the Bicêtre, inasmuch as the pupils are more numerous, and the facilities for their education more extended; but the following details, taken from a lecture delivered by Mr. Sidney, at Croydon, the 22nd of December, 1862, are more definite and suitable for quotation here. He says:—"Out of thirty-one pupils discharged since last year, their terms being completed, only two went away unimproved; seventeen had received great benefit; and twelve—seven boys and five girls—had so much profited as to be able to work for their livelihood; some of them have, indeed, obtained regular employment, the girls in domestic service, and the boys as carpenters, tailors, and

mat-makers." Again, referring to the specimens of the work of the pupils which were exhibited in the lecture-room, he says:—"You see here many examples of neat handicraft, all performed by the once apparently lost and degraded children, the butts of the thoughtless youth around them, or avoided, or neglected, or maltreated by those who now see the duty of cherishing them. On inspecting these examples of progress in the different employments, you will not be surprised to be told that the wardrobes of the house are furnished by the industry of the pupils. Male attire, female garments, sheets and mats, to say nothing of fancy needlework, some of which are before you, are all made in the house. . . . Fifteen of the pupils are employed in the carpenter's shop, twelve are shoemakers, fifteen are tailors, and five make mats. Nine pupils work on the farm, and the same number in the garden, and manifest the greatest diligence and zeal. Fourteen boys assist the attendants, and help to carry on the house-work, in which they take singular pride and pleasure—cleaning shoes, knives and forks, and plates, or scrubbing heartily. Seventy-three are in the industrial training school, and many making progress. Twenty girls perform the duties of household servants, and thirteen are really adepts at needlework. . . . I may say, generally, that although all the pupils are not improved to the extent of the better cases adverted to, yet all are improved in personal appearance, health, habits, and comfort. A majority are found to have increased in vigour, decency, self-control, perception, speech, knowledge of objects, and proper demeanour. Many have become able to manifest powers of every description, more or less; as to observe, to behave well, to think on various things fairly, to maintain good habits, to engage in the pursuits and occupations of which you see results in the things shown this evening; and, above all, in the sense of duty and the exercises of religion, with a lively consciousness of right and wrong. A person who was with me on a visit to the asylum, for instance, heard the mason I have mentioned as working so cleverly at the new buildings, rebuke a boy who was desirous to conceal a fault he had committed, by saying, 'Deceiving the master when you are doing wrong is adding sin to sin.' Who would have looked for such an observation from one who, at his coming under the care of the officers of the asylum, appeared hopeless in all respects, and had been the game of the young and thoughtless?"

The Report of this institution for the year ending 5th April, 1864, gives the following table of the occupations of 259 of the 365 pupils in it during the year:—

MALES.		FEMALES.	
Carpenters, . . . .	18	Household work, . . . .	17
Shoemakers, . . . .	17	Needlework, . . . .	41
Mat Weavers, and helpers		Repairing clothing, . . . .	11
in mat shops, . . . .	71	Assistant nurses, . . . .	2
Basketmakers, . . . .	2		—
Tailors, . . . .	30		71
Farm and garden, . . . .	25		
Plumber, . . . .	1		
Household work, . . . .	17		
Laundry, . . . .	7		
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The writer of the article in *The North British Review*, already referred to, states that “three pupils left Earlswood last year (1862) who are now entirely self-supporting. One of these, who, when admitted, appeared stulen and good for nothing, and could not learn the simplest thing, now resides in lodgings at Notting Hill, and earns four shillings a-day.”

Abundance of such evidence of success could easily be adduced, but if anything further be required to justify the appeal now made on behalf of the idiotic and imbecile children of Ireland, it will be found in the following eloquent words used in advocating the claims of the asylum at Earlswood, by the late Lord Carlisle, who, like our present Viceroy, his Excellency Lord Wodehouse, was a warm supporter of the cause:—

“Few descriptions of persons can be conceived more entitled to our generous sympathy and our active assistance. Without being invested with the more solemn and picturesque drapery of tragic dignity, they are exposed, perhaps beyond all others, to the cold neglect, the coarse gibes, the brutal merriment of a callous and unfeeling world; they are the butt and scarecrow of the village green—often the drudge sent out from the domestic hearth. Take it that they meet with no ill-treatment—nay, that family decencies, and family affections gather round them, guide their path, and smooth their pillows—yet what a life of negatives is theirs, at the



very best ! Nature spreads in vain her witchery of hues, her golden sunsets and starry firmaments ; to their untutored ears music has no melody ; to their stagnant minds literature and science, and art, and the sacred muse, utter no varied voice ; to their torpid souls, devotion points no God. I am sure those benevolent and devoted men, who are most anxious for its success, and who have laboured most for it, will have no wish to exaggerate its effects or its capacities. They will not tell you, that they hope to convert the patients whom they receive within this institution into philosophers, orators, poets, statesmen. The instantaneous cure, the entire change of the possessed mind, were the work of Him alone, whose voice the demons heard and at once came out ; but the officers of this institution will tell you, that much may be done ; that by judiciously ministering to the requirements of both the physical and the moral organization, orderly habits, steady employment, rational tastes, kindly feelings, just sensibilities of the affections and the conscience, the sense of right and wrong, the fear and love of God, may be introduced, and fostered, and developed into all their multiplied and goodly results—in fact, the soul may, as it were, be re-created, so that, in the best instances, the idiot may be converted into a decent and creditable member of society, in the worst, his existence may be surrounded with an atmosphere of comfort and tenderness. Are not such results worth struggling for ?

“ We are erecting this year a vast edifice, which I am disposed to think we may take a just pride in as a model of modern enterprise and mechanism, directed to an enlightened and philanthropic purpose. But the glories of the Crystal Palace would be dim by the side of an adequate house of shelter and of cure for all the idiots of our land ; and it would be a more honourable spectacle, if it could only be achieved by your large-hearted liberality, than the display of the world’s goods amid the alleys of the gigantic show-room. And when the foreigners who throng to our shores shall tell us, as they may with partial truth, that some of them excel us in their monumental buildings, the palaces of their kings, their public walks and gardens, their sparkling fountains, and their galleries of art, we shall not feel abashed if we can tell them, that there is in our wide metropolis scarcely a human want which does not find its remedy, a human disease which has not its hospital, a human sorrow which may not seek for its refuge ; and amid that goodly assemblage, AN ASYLUM FOR IDIOTS OUGHT TO BE NO LONGER WANTING.”